

There are 14 chapters and all save one—the 5-page chapter on the cerebrospinal fluid—have undergone substantial revision. The pattern is set at the beginning with concise and simplified definitions of neurology, neuropathology, psychology, and psychiatry and the premise that “for the student to understand any one of these subjects he must have a working knowledge of all four.” Concerning the last of these 4 subjects the author honestly states, “The psychiatrist knows much about what occurs in abnormal minds, but little about how and why it occurs.” And again, epigrammatically, “Psychiatry is the oldest of the medical arts but the youngest of the medical sciences.”

This book begins, as any good psychiatric text should begin, at the beginning; *i.e.*, with anatomy and physiology and the interrelationships and functions of the various parts of the central nervous system. Coming to the cerebral cortex Cobb sums up the present status of the localization question and indicates the specifically human qualities of the pre-Rolandic area which controls “the skilled, special ‘voluntary’ movements of a man [of the fingers, lips, tongue, etc., and which] cannot be studied in other mammals.”

If the Sphinx had wished to be still more inscrutable she might have asked, “What is consciousness?” The author discusses the question but knows that the ultimate answer is not within reach. He points out that consciousness is a relative matter, not all or none, but more or less; and these varying degrees of awareness of environment and self are associated “with the cortex and the reverberating thalamocortical circuits.”

The ancient, still current, and misleading dichotomies “functional-organic,” “physical-mental,” are purely arbitrary, the author shows, and indicate only “the point to which technology has advanced . . . what kind of a ‘scope,’ ‘graph,’ or ‘meter’ is used by the observer.”

The fundamental nature of the “Foundations” is gratifyingly evident in the space (73 pages) allotted to neuropathology. Here the common morbid changes both in peripheral nerves and in brain tissue are passed in review. The pathological conditions associated with trauma, neurosyphilis, meningitis, encephalitis, vascular disease, tumors, the aging process, mental deficiency, and familial nervous diseases are all specifically dealt with.

A separate chapter is devoted to epilepsy. Another, of special importance, sets forth some of the psychological concepts that are or should be of particular interest to all medical men. But before the multitudinous workers in the broad field of the mental sciences can hope to cooperate or even communicate satisfactorily with medicine in general they should be able to present a reasonably united front. One of the best of many good things Dr. Cobb says in this book is contained in a paragraph on page 233 in which he exposes and castigates the mutual intolerance displayed by various groups of workers in special fields. He concludes appositely: “These whorls of tempestuous tea-leaves in the boiling pot of psychology should be something for the psychologists themselves to study. Luckily,” he adds, “the

brew is not all bitter, and gradually more psychologists of different sorts do sit down together and mutually benefit.”

In chapter 14 the author reviews “the principal types of pathological behavior likely to be seen by the average physician.” The ideal classification based on etiology is not yet. However, syndromes may be grouped under 4 general headings: (1) hereditary (genogenic), (2) neuropathological (histogenic), (3) chemical (chemogenic), (4) psychopathological (psychogenic). The author emphasizes the desirability of avoiding the “unwarranted and misleading” generalizations that are still so regularly repeated of dividing psychiatric disorders into “psychotic or neurotic” as well as into “organic or functional.” The bad habit of using these terms as if they stood for conditions more or less mutually exclusive should be abandoned.

While there are inevitably individual variations from patient to patient, morbid reactions do fall for the most part into a few general syndromes—psychoneurotic disorders, schizo-affective reactions, psychosomatic reactions, chemogenic and histogenic disorders, etc.—and these the author concisely describes. The technical methods of the specialist, laboratory procedures, psychological tests, and problems of treatment do not fall within the scope of this book. It is a condensed but thoroughly comprehensive, rigidly scientific introduction to neuropsychiatry. As such it is the most useful text that can be recommended.

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CHILDHOOD AND SOCIETY. By Erik H. Erikson. (New York: W.W. Norton and Co., 1950. Price: \$4.00.)

This author has the rare ability to translate the complexities of psychoanalytic thinking as related to childhood into everyday language without watering it down. This is enhanced by incorporating insights he has gained through his work in growth and development, anthropology, and clinical contacts with children. He presents a happy wedding of physical and emotional growth and development, which in turn is applied in practical terms to the understanding of cultural phenomena.

The book is divided into 4 parts: the first deals with the biological basis of psychoanalytic theory; the second part concerns the rearing, education, and developing of cultural patterns in children raised in divergent forms of society; the third presents forms of ego functioning and pathology, including discussions on the role of play in childhood; the fourth applies some of this composite thinking to considerations of American cultural patterns including folklore and German and Russian identities through what is known of Hitler's and Gorky's youth.

It is felt that Erikson's greatest contribution here is the clarity and enrichment he brings to fundamental problems of personality growth. There is a looseness and tendency to philosophize and generalize in the second and fourth parts of the book. He concludes, however, with a tighter discussion on “The Fear of Anxiety,” in which some of our

current patterns of functioning as a society are examined, offering signposts as to the directions in which our basic intolerances, fears, and anxieties are taking us, and what they might indicate in terms of social health.

For the very many who enjoyed the Mid-Century White House Conference fact-finding reports to which Erikson contributed liberally, this book will provide a profitable filling in of the outlines presented there. It is considered a worth-while addition for the bookshelves of workers in every social field involving children, especially those workers who appreciate relatively nontechnical language.

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PROBLEMS OF INFANCY AND CHILDHOOD: Transactions of the Fourth Conference; Supplement: Symposium on the Healthy Personality; Supplement: Family Centered Maternity and Infant Care. Edited by *Milton J. E. Senn*. (New York: Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation, 1951.)

These 3 interesting books comprise the work of the Committee on Infancy and Childhood, supported by the Josiah Macy, Jr. Foundation in its fourth year of work to encourage a "re-integration of science, now artificially fragmented by the isolation of the several scientific disciplines and specialties"—in this particular instance those disciplines concerned with and about infancy and childhood. The work of the committee during this year (1950) was directed toward assistance in preparation for the Mid-Century White House Conference and the realization of its objectives by delineating what is known about healthy personality development in children and what can be done in assuring the rearing of a sound emotionally healthy younger generation.

The first volume, "Problems of Infancy and Childhood," presents 3 papers: (1) "Cultural Determination of Parental Attitudes: The Relationship between Social Structure, Particularly Family Structure, and Parental Behavior" by George Murdoch and John W. M. Whiting (anthropologists), (2) "A Consideration of Some Problems in the Ontogeny of Family Life and Social Adjustment in Various Infra-Human Animals" by T. C. Schneirla, and (3) "Working toward Healthy Personality" by Laurence K. Frank. While the latter paper seemed to relate more particularly to the theme of the White House Conference, the other papers did point out significantly the important contributions anthropology and animal psychology can make in understanding human behavior.

In the second volume, "Symposium on the Healthy Personality," 3 papers, (1) "Growth and Crises in Healthy Personality" by Erik H. Erikson, (2) "Constitutional and Prenatal Factors in Infancy and Child Health" by M. F. Ashley Montagu, and (3) "Toward a Social Psychology of Mental Health" by Marie Jahoda, provided excellent material for a lively interchange of ideas of the participants.

The supplement, "Family Centered Maternity

and Infant Care," is a short but lucid discussion of the "rooming in" plan in the modern maternity hospital setting, its definition, objectives, and initial observations; included also is a brief outline of the chronological development of the "rooming in" plan from 1941 to 1950 together with an excellent bibliography and a section on questions for further research in this area.

The conference sessions operated in the same manner as the previous ones, namely, presentation of a basic paper by one of the group, followed by free discussion. The reporting of the discussions is provocative and interesting. To this reviewer the discussions seemed to reflect a developing skill among the members of the committee in working together more smoothly and efficiently. In this sense it is an excellent demonstration of how the "group process" can function in clarifying issues and arriving at basic conclusions.

These 3 volumes can be highly recommended to everyone interested in the problems of infancy and childhood.

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PATHOLOGICAL FIRESETTING (PYROMANIA). By *Nolan D. C. Lewis and Helen Yarnell*. (New York: Nervous and Mental Disease Monographs, 1951.)

This is a study of pathological firesetting or pyromania. It is based primarily on an examination of cases from the files of the National Board of Fire Underwriters. From 2,000 case records, the authors selected 1,145 cases of males 16 years of age or older, together with 238 cases of juveniles. In the latter group, 18 were girls under 16. In the whole series, the incidence of firesetting by females is comparatively slight. The study is further supplemented by one detailed case study derived from another source, and by several accessory sources. The review of the rather limited literature on incendiarism discloses the interesting fact that little of such literature is of recent origin. The study was sponsored jointly by Columbia University and the National Board of Fire Underwriters. It is always heartening to note the sponsorship of medical research by nonmedical organizations.

The authors apply the label of pyromania "to any individual manifesting a pathological desire to set fires. . . ." It is not a specific psychiatric entity. It has been used in both legal and medical writing. All parties agree that incendiarism for profit (arson) is not included. That is not pathological. But what is? An attempt has been made "to classify under pyromania only those firesetters who are unable to offer a sensible motive for the arson." The inclusion of the word sensible raises an issue, because a certain proportion of firesetters offer reasons that to them appear sensible, such as desires for revenge, attempted suicide, jealousy, etc. Obviously, many of the proffered reasons were "secondary rationalizations." There were 688 male adults "who said they set their fires for no practical reason